



ERP Winners Enjoy Their Day in the (Hot) Sun

By John McKay

Spirits soared as high as the temperature as the Employee Recognition Program (ERP) Committee held its seasonal luncheon at the Solomon Welles house in Wethersfield to celebrate DAS employees' unique contributions to the agency.

Recipients, their managers and guests were treated to a picnic-style cookout on the porch of the historic building.

"It's important to recognize and reward good work, said Commissioner Linda Yelmini at her first ERP ceremony. "This is perfect."

Team Excellence

Chris Smith, Doug Belli, Jose Baez, Anna Tara, Brian Halloran, Cheryl Cepelak, and Kathleen Kabara worked on the daunting task of migrating all email systems to the state standard of Outlook 2003. This team configured, trained, converted and implemented this project on time and with little interruption to DAS staff. In addition, in order to minimize disruption to DAS, most pre-work, configuration, and the actual migration were performed after hours, at night, and on weekends by the team.

Resident trainers Cheryl Cepelak and Kathleen Kabara were the first users to be migrated over, months before the final implementation date, to test, learn, and develop a training plan for other employees. The coordinated efforts of all facets that go into migrating a huge program like Outlook 2003 and having trainers educated on its use, is a



Front to Back: Commissioner Yelmini, Jean Michael, Anna Tara, Cindy Shea, Henry Jovanelly, Jose Baez, Isabelle McKinney, Lori Coleman, Eva Merriman, Chris Smith, Peter Hunter, Brian Halloran, Doug Belli

testament to how a real team spirit can make any project manageable.

Customer Service

Nothing speaks louder about an organization than excellent customer service. The "Prequal" team of Peter Hunter, Isabelle McKinney, Cynthia Shea and Lynn Peccerillo provide this service on a daily basis and are the recipients of the Customer Service Award. The team conducts training sessions for both contractors and awarding authorities. Sessions focus on how to complete the on-line application, contractor performance evaluations and bid posting requirements -

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more photos on next page!*

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Clockwise L to R: Going the Extra Mile: Eva Merriman, Lori Coleman; Team Excellence: Doug Belli, Anna Tara, Jose Baez, Brian Halloran, Chris Smith, missing are Cheryl Cepelak and Kathleen Kabara; Going the Extra Mile: Henry Jovanelly; Remarkable Innovation: Jean Michael; Customer Service: Isabelle McKinney, Cindy Shea, Peter Hunter, missing is Lynn Peccerillo



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M. Jodi Rell
Governor

Linda J. Yelmini
Commissioner

Donna J. Micklus
Editor

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www.das.state.ct.us

Isabelle McKinney sent the following messages to DAS employees for their participation in the 4th Annual Taste of DAS:

“Commissioner Yelmini, we are so happy that you had the opportunity to attend the Taste of DAS. The stuffed shells were absolutely delicious and I heard others commenting on how tasty they were. With your busy schedule, the time that you set aside to prepare such a tedious dish is very much appreciated. Thank you so much for your support! By the way, to my knowledge, all that indulged including myself, are all feeling well.”

“Deputy Commissioner Ficeto, it was with great pleasure to see you at the Taste of DAS. We enjoyed your gracious spirit of sitting with us in the dining area and exchanging conversation. Oh yes, the tiramisu was scrumptious! Anna, thank you so much for contribution and support.”

Thank you to **Pam Libby** and **Martin Anderson** “for going the extra mile to make sure that the 4th Annual Taste of DAS would be all that it could be—and it was a success!”

Thank you to **Sandra Guerra**, “the Yucca appetizer was absolutely fabulous! Sandra, they appear to be time-consuming to prepare, so we appreciate the effort that you put forth to help to make the event a success!”

Thank you to **Audrey Pinette**, **Juliet Colebrook**, and **Sue Turko**. “Ladies, I cannot thank you enough for the hard work that all of you put forth from early in the morning to the end of the event. Your willingness to do what was needed to get the job done is appreciated and it was such a pleasure to work with you.”

Thanks to **John McKay** “because again you were right there with the

Council helping us look good. As always, you do great work and we appreciate all that you do. Thanks for helping to make this event a success. Have a great day!”

Thank you to **Cindy Rusczyk** “for preparing the labels for the Taste of DAS, and you did it without hesitation. It’s always a pleasure to work you because you ‘just do it.’”

Thank you to **Peter Varhol**. “You came through for us again. We thank you so much for your help and comic relief. As always, your assistance is much appreciated. Have a great day!”

Andrea Keilty sends many thanks to **Kathleen Kabara**, **Aimee Gagnon** and **Lynn Peccerillo** for all their assistance in keeping her afloat during the legislative session. “Thanks guys, I wouldn’t have made it without you!”

Carol E. Bower from the Department of Public Health (DPH) expressed her “thanks to **Nina Ritson** and **Alex Caceres** for going ‘above and beyond the call of duty’ to get a printing job done for the Connecticut Cancer Partnership and the Comprehensive Cancer Control program at DPH. Nina did a great sales job for DAS Central Printing and she helped me to get various elements of the electronic document in a form that would reproduce well with the available equipment. Alex worked with me every step of the way to ensure that the Plan was the best it could be and that it was delivered on time. I would not hesitate to use the DAS Central Printing again or to recommend it to my colleagues.”

Adam Liegeot from the Governor’s Office sent “Big kudos to **John McKay** who, under a tighter than tight deadline, helped our office with some highly technical communica-

tions design questions. I’m pretty sure we would still be scratching our heads today if John hadn’t saved us. Thanks John!”

MUCHO KUDOS go out from Pam Libby and Shari Grzyb:

For their efforts developing/ presenting the curricula for the State of CT HR Management Certificate Program: **Diane Mazar-Roberts**, **Diane Fitzpatrick**, **Carla Kushin**, **Susan Pawloski-Burke**, **Heather Tweeddale**, **Toni Alphonse**, **Martin Anderson**, **Lisa Chasse**, **Deb Atkinson**, **Cheryl Catania**, **Kathleen Kabara**, **Dave Lynn**, **Sandee Sharr**, **Joe Prevuznak**, **Patsy McLaughlin**, **Andrea Keilty**.

hats off

By Cindy Rusczyk

For her input concerning enhancements to the Program’s presentation materials and ideas for group interactions: **Cheryl Cepelak**.

For all of his assistance with our communication needs: development of the program brochure, posters, graphics, logos, etc.: **John McKay**.

For his technical expertise – and willingness to always go the extra mile with a smile: **Jose Baez**.

For his attention to detail and proficiency in arranging training rooms to maximize space and ensure comfort: **Peter Varhol**.

For his assistance with getting the program information onto the DAS Website and linked to the HRLC database: **Bill Skyrme**.

For the excellent customer service provided (sometimes on very short notice): **The Print Shop**.

For making sure all of the niceties for each class are covered: **Nancy Jones** and **Susan Turko**.

What's Happening Across the Street

By Donna Micklus
and Andrea Keilty

The legislative session was over on June 8, so where do we stand on bills that affect DAS? We checked in with Legislative Liaison Andrea Keilty on their status.

Keilty reported that she is working on a complete outline of all the bills of interest to DAS business units, but must wait until the end of the legislature's "special session," and the Governor's final action on the bills, to know for sure where we stand on all the issues.

Keilty did report on the four bills that DAS submitted to the legislature this year.

"All the legislative changes that DAS sought this year passed. While I don't believe that any of our changes are in jeopardy, as of today, the Governor has not signed the bills – they don't even have public act numbers yet," Keilty explained.

The changes that DAS got through this session are:

(1) Changes to the Contractor Prequalification Program

Changes that the DAS Contractor Prequalification Unit sought were passed in Senate Bill 94

The Contractor Prequalification program was statutorily created in 2003, and went into effect this past October, 2004. Since going "live" in October, the unit has identified some areas of concern. The legislation cleaned up some of those problems. Specifically, the legislation adds an enforcement mechanism to the program to ensure compliance with the requirement that only contractors that have been through the prequalification process be used for

publicly-funded construction projects. The legislation also removes provisions from the prequalification review process that bottleneck, or do not add value to the process.

Although DAS did not request it, the bill that made these prequalification program changes also expanded the program to include the prequalification of large subcontractors – those that get subcontracts worth more than \$500,000 on construction projects for which the state provides some money. Presently, prequalification is only required for those who directly contract with the state – not subs. These changes become effective January 1, 2006.

(2) FOIA Exemption for Procurement Documents

Section 28 of Senate Bill 94 (Effective upon passage)

DAS also successfully lobbied for a Freedom of Information Act exemption for documents submitted in response to RFPs. DAS felt that making bids and proposals public during the negotiation process gives the negotiating company a considerable advantage over the state, since the negotiating company itself could view the bids/proposals of its competitors. A section in Senate Bill 94 delays disclosure under FOIA of responses to requests for proposals and records or files made in connection with an award process, only until a contract is awarded or until negotiations have ceased, whichever occurs first. However, the legislation requires that, if an agency wants to use this exemption, the agency head certifies that the public interest in disclosing the documents is out-



weighed by the public interest in keeping the documents confidential.

The legislation also ensures that the competitive process for selecting vendors is protected, and that the state does not compromise its ability to negotiate the best contract value for taxpayers.

All documentation will be disclosable after a contract is awarded or when negotiations cease.

The FOIA exemption was effective upon the bill's passage.

(3) Increasing Collections through Insurance Notice

This proposal passed in the budget, but the language is being negotiated in the OPM implementer bill, which will be taken up in the special session.

This proposal improves the process by which DAS collects debts owed to the State of Connecticut, will make the process more fair and, will greatly increase the amount of

ERP Awards, *cont. from p.1*

the team has held 20 training sessions and trained more than 120 individuals. Additionally, the team has an immediate callback policy so that customers have nearly real-time solutions to their issues.

Remarkable Innovation

Winning the Remarkable Innovation award, Jean Michael of the Business Office got high marks in her nomination, "...Jean installed new cost saving processes, saving \$300,000, and improved morale 1000%. She accepts complete responsibility for all phases of her work, continually monitoring and measuring progress. Jean attacks issues by truly understanding the problem...for a problem clearly stated and defined is half-solved already. The nominator went on to say, "They say that work defines a person's

character: 'Some turn up their sleeves, some turn up their noses, and some do not turn up at all.' This person always is the first to turn up her sleeves."

Going the Extra Mile

The Going The Extra Mile award went to Eva Merriman and Lori Coleman of Procurement Services. They were cited for consistently demonstrating a true commitment to the department with the support they provide for the staff. They have gone above and beyond to ensure that things are done quickly, efficiently, and accurately.

Their nomination read, "Eva and Lori support a staff of approximately 26 in an environment where strict time constraints are the norm. Their work is focused and consistent to make sure each staff member meets their customers' demands."

Going the Extra Mile II

Who says there can only be one winner per category? The ERP committee was impressed with two nominations for the Going the Extra Mile award and recognized Collections' Henry Jovanelly as a contender. Henry has had an "award winning" few weeks. Not only was he recognized by ERP, but also received the Governor's Service Award in early June. As head of the Collections Unit, Henry will bring in over \$800 million in revenue this year. He exceeds the revenue target and breaks all records every year. Henry's nominator went on to say, "There is no one in state service more committed to and passionate about their work. While we tend to celebrate 'great' state agencies, in reality there are only great employees."

Legislation, *cont. from p.4*

revenue we are able to collect for the state.

Presently, DAS is authorized to collect money that individuals owe to the state by placing liens on such sources as inheritances, decedent estates, and causes of action. This proposal affects the cause of action collection process.

The proposal does not in any way increase DAS's authority to collect money on behalf of the state. It merely changes the process.

Currently, DAS can only identify and lien a cause of action when we are notified by the Connecticut courts that a lawsuit has been filed in their system. To date, we have not been able to consistently identify causes of action that are settled short of the judicial process.

This reality creates an inconsistency in that only those who file their claim in court have to repay their state debt, not those who settle outside the legal process.

This proposal fixes this inconsistency by establishing a uniform notice procedure – DAS would be notified by insurance companies when claims for personal injury damages are made.

Not only would this process ensure the fair treatment of all debtors, it will greatly increase the revenue collected for the General Fund. DAS is expected to collect an additional \$10 million in this fiscal year, and \$15 million in the next fiscal year as a result of this procedure.

Keilty said she expects the insurance notice requirements to be effective September 1, 2005.

(4) *Deleting Obsolete Provisions in the DAS Statutes*

Senate Bill 96, Sections 8 & 9. Effective upon passage.

DAS was also successful in deleting some obsolete provisions in our statutes, including references to the Automated Personnel System, the state regional laundry system, warehouses, the State Data Center, bakeries, meat cutting establishments, etc. These changes are effective immediately.

"Of course, these changes represent only part of the story, since so much other legislation passed that affects DAS and our business units. The real story is yet to come, when the session is over and we've had the opportunity to evaluate what's passed," Keilty concluded.

Stay tuned for the full report!

HR Launches Statewide Training Program

By John McKay

DAS' Human Resources office is considered the state government authority on HR issues. And it's time to share that knowledge.

To that end they have created the State of Connecticut Human Resources Management Certificate Program. It's designed to provide HR professionals with information concerning a multitude of topics and will provide participants with written and electronic resources to aid in accurate completion of their work.

"After the implementation of Core-CT, it became apparent that DAS needed to take the lead and provide training to agency HR professionals in order to ensure consistent application of HR business rules," explained Shari Grzyb, one of the program coordinators.

"Completing 11 days of training with the same group of participants also provides a unique opportunity to meet and build an expanded network of other HR professionals that we believe will encourage consistent practices throughout the state." Shari Grzyb

HR Director Pam Libby also said that with so many employees taking advantage of the Early Retirement Incentive Program two years ago, much of the state's HR institutional

knowledge was lost.

"With the loss of those folks, there was clearly a need to address that concern and fill that gap," Libby said.

The Certificate Program took on a life of its own as it moved forward in its development phases.

Although it remains a program focused on the fundamentals of state human resources management, it also provides a more in-depth look at some topics, such as Family and Medical Leave, Workplace Violence Prevention and Sexual Harassment, specifically tailored to the role and responsibilities of an HR professional.

So far, six sessions have been scheduled to date and were full within three days after posting on the HRLC website.

Session I began on June 20 with a full class and has already received excellent feedback. The end of Session VI is January 10, 2006 and DAS HR anticipates scheduling another 10 sessions to begin after mid-March 2006.

"The first five days of the 11-day curriculum is sequential," Grzyb explained.

Information presented in the first class leaves off where the information



State of Connecticut Human Resources Management Certificate Program



- Leadership
- Communication
- Organization
- Professionalism
- Creativity
- Team Building Skills
- Knowledgeable
- Ethical Behavior

Building Critical HR Competencies

Prepared by the Department of Administrative Services
Statewide Human Resources Management



in the second class begins, and so on. Because of this, participants must complete all 11 days of training to become certified.

"Completing 11 days of training with the same group of participants also provides a unique opportunity to meet and build an expanded network of other HR professionals that we believe will encourage consistent practices throughout the state," Grzyb said.

Lights - Camera - Action!

By Nina Ritson

Well, make that lights - camera - Procurement 101.....

Training took center stage on Wednesday, June 8 at the Department of Transportation (DOT) when the DAS Procurement Learning Center launched its first-ever live webcast training class using streaming media.

The room was packed with purchasing folks from all state agencies as well as DAS staff and the film/audio crew from DOT.

A self-described nervous Maureen Friedman, who moderated the session, introduced herself to the classroom.

"Streaming media technology has been around for a few years now, but until recently was not practical because current computer hardware, software and servers did not support this technology," Friedman said.

DOT received a federal grant to pilot streaming media within their agency. Through the grant, they purchased cameras, audio equipment, lighting, and audio mixing and video editing systems.

The funding did not include positions, however, so the engineers by day became Steven Spielbergers in their off hours, with a crash course in video production.

Procurement's Friedman and Donna Camillone of MIS collaborated with the DOT folks to tape a

demo then produce the live Procurement 101 training webcast.

Why is streaming media a great tool for training?

Friedman enthusiastically promoted its use.

"It allows the viewer to observe a live session uninterrupted because the technology allows the video to be continuously downloaded in 'packets' rather than having to wait for the entire file to download prior to viewing. Also, the training class can be offered for 'on demand' viewing at a later date along with links to the appropriate training materials," she explained.

This exciting technology allows one to integrate special effects into the video such as "picture in picture".

With the use of multiple cameras, viewers are able to see a Powerpoint presentation on the screen along with a live picture of the presenter inserted in the corner, which makes for a more dynamic training session.

As the Procurement 101 class was being filmed at the DOT Research Facility in Rocky Hill with a full classroom of participants – another class in Newington was filled with students also. They were observing the training via computer and full screen projection and were able to



email questions that were answered during the filming.

Why is streaming media technology so important?

DAS recognizes the many potential uses of streaming video within the agency such as training, new employee orientation, marketing and job recruitment to name a few.

A committee of DAS folks is currently exploring the use of streaming media in business training. So get your popcorn and hotdog and stay tuned!

U.S. EPA Honors Connecticut Climate Change Leadership

By Barbara Moser

Commissioner Yelmini Recipient of 2005 Annual Climate Protection Award

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Annual Climate Protection Award honors extraordinary accomplishments of individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to protecting the environment.

This year DAS Commissioner Linda Yelmini along with the chairman of the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund (CCEF), commissioners of the Departments of Environmental Protection, Public Utility Control, and

Transportation, and the Undersecretary of the Office of Policy and Management received the prestigious award for their work on the Governor's Steering Committee on Climate Change.

During the ceremony, Region 1 EPA Administrator Varney commended Yelmini for the recent DAS purchase of 125 gasoline-hybrid electric vehicles, saying that such efforts by Connecticut state agencies have made Connecticut a leader in decreasing the greenhouse gas emissions that cause global warming.

Congratulations Commissioner Yelmini!



DAS Employees Race for the Cure

By Donna Micklus



The 90-plus degree weather in Bushnell Park on June 11 didn't make for perfect race conditions, but the DAS fleet of foot were not to be deterred.

Commissioner Linda Yelmini was there as a member of the Team Rell group. Other brave runners and walkers were: Lilka Vega and three of her family members/guests, Martin Anderson and his daughter Monika, Carla Kushin and her husband, Martha Gallagher, Deb Atkinson, and Cheryl Cepelak. Sandee Sharr walked with her mother who is a breast cancer survivor.

Volunteering in the Baggage Tent were Deputy Commis-

sioner Anna Ficeto, Anna Tara, Deb Atkinson, and Cheryl Cepelak.

According to Cepelak, the DAS team raised over \$300!

Cepelak also reported there were 8,000 participants running, walking and/or volunteering and so far have raised over \$800,000.

She said that 75% of the money raised will stay in Connecticut and be granted to local entities for the purpose of breast cancer screening, education and treatment; 25% will be sent to the Komen National Foundation for research purposes; a percent of that actually ends up back in Connecticut since we have Yale and UConn conducting research.



Happenings

...our strength is in our differences

The *Tantalizing* Taste of DAS

Event Success Measured by More than Good Food

By Maureen Friedman

The 4th Annual Taste of DAS, hosted by the Diversity Council, was held on June 8, 2005. Entrees representing the many cultures of DAS employees could be found in the South Mechanical Room. Drinks and desserts were available in the New Haven Room. But the real place to be was the 5th floor south employee lounge. That is where Diversity Council members and food coordinators set the individual tables together into one single table so that

everyone could eat "family style". That is where employees from the diverse areas within DAS were able to get to know each other and Deputy Commissioner Anna Ficeto, who was able to join them for great food and conversation. Commissioner Linda Yelmini was also able to stop in several times to greet employees and join in the festivities.

This was the first Taste of DAS for the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and Executive Secretary, Sandra Guerra and they all contributed delicious dishes. Linda's stuffed shells, Anna's Tiramisu and Sandra's Muchines, an Ecuadorian dish of stuffed yucca, joined the many other epicurean delights offered by DAS employees.

Even though participation in the event was smaller than previous years, the hospitality, positive attitudes and hard work on everyone's

part made it a huge success.

The Diversity Council thanks everyone that participated and contributed to celebrate and support the diversity in our workplace.

Are you interested in joining the Diversity Council?

Now is your chance!
The Diversity Council is looking for new members. If you are interested in joining or would like more information about becoming a Diversity Council member, contact Isabelle McKinney, Council Chair, at 713-5103 or isabelle.mckinney@po.state.ct.us

Don't Miss The Boat, Rock It!



The DAS Summer Picnic sets sail on August 19. The last day to purchase your ticket is July 15. Contact Tammy Battistoni at ext: 5052 for more information. Enjoy a 2-hour cruise down the Connecticut River, return around 3:00, plus the opportunity to meet fellow DAS employees or just enjoy the weather, company and cocktails. Lunch includes:

- Assorted Gourmet Sandwiches or Wraps
- Red Skin Potato Salad
- Green Beans with Walnut-Dill Dressing
- Crudités Table (Cheese platter w/fresh fruit, vegetables and dip)
- Assorted Chips
- Assorted Miniature Pastries
- Soda Included
- Cash Bar